

GI SPECIAL 4J14:



[Thanks to Z and NB, who sent this in.]

Firestorm:
**“Soldiers Were In No Mood To
Back Down”**
**“We Were Lied To When It All
Started And We Are Still Lied To
Today!”**

14 October 2006 By Colin Brown, Terri Judd and Andrew Buncombe in Washington,
Independent News and Media Limited

The authority of Tony Blair was left battered last night as he attempted to play down a rift with the head of the British Army over his unprecedented warning that the presence of foreign troops was "exacerbating" the security situation in Iraq

The devastating assessment by General Sir Richard Dannatt, the chief of the general staff, infuriated ministers and caused alarm in Washington.

However there was widespread backing across the Army yesterday as soldiers of every rank praised General Dannatt for standing up to the Government.

Within hours of his comments being made public, the Army's unofficial website was packed with hundreds of blogs from troops voicing their support. The messages included: "Can Tony Blair recover from this and justify British presence in Iraq, without using the words 'I was wrong ...?'" Another said: "Dannatt gets my vote! Anyone care to disagree with him? We were lied to when it all started and we are still lied to today!"

Other serving soldiers were also quick to voice their relief at the general's intervention.

One senior officer said: "It has been decades since someone senior actually stood up for us, the soldiers and their families.

"People need to take him seriously. This is not a man who is thinking about his career. This is a man who passionately and clearly believes he should tell the truth and represent all of us."

As General Dannatt insisted that there was no rift with the Government, his soldiers were in no mood to back down. Senior officers said he should be "saluted" for his honesty, and frontline soldiers praised him for "telling it how it is".

A non-commissioned officer said: "He has spoken the truth. I think many people feel that but nobody would say it. I agree we should try and get out as soon as we can. That is not to say we let them fight among themselves, but we have always said we would go when the job was done, and I hope it is sooner rather than later.

In his interview with the Daily Mail, General Dannatt said we should "get ourselves out sometime soon because our presence exacerbates security problems".

The Prime Minister's growing number of critics will be emboldened by the challenge to his authority by the general.

Mr Blair's allies are worried where the next challenge will come from. "It's the end of an era," said one minister.

MORE:

“We Have Become An Army Run By Managers And Led By An Officer Corps With Little Sense Of Duty Other Than To Themselves”

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

13/10/2006 The Telegraph (UK) [Excerpts]

The head of the Army has called for a withdrawal of British troops from Iraq "sometime soon", saying the presence of the forces is making the situation worse.

Soldiers serving in Iraq have spoken to the Daily Telegraph about conditions on the ground.

Col David Labouchere, commander of British forces in Maysan province, on hostility of local people to their presence: "When we arrived in 2003 they said 'what are you bringing?'. We said we can bring reconstruction and new police forces and democracy. That was all very well three years ago ... but if we cannot deliver the goodies then you are excess to what is needed. Just because we are the hardest tribe here does not matter much to them."

Capt Ali Wigham, Queen Royal Hussars, on the deteriorating situation in the south: "When I was last here (in 2004) you would just go down to the local police station and talk to them while travelling in two Land Rovers. Now it is three to six armoured vehicles."

He continues: "Being here is very wearing on the nerves as we are under regular incoming fire. At the worst we had 56 mortars in one day (into Camp Abu Naji)."

Cpl Kevin Douglas, in Basra earlier this year: "Often you go out on patrol and talk to people and then come back, and you sit down and think, 'What did I really achieve today?'. But you have got to dispel that thought. There is no point thinking about whether we are doing good or bad, what the people back in Britain think or what we are

actually achieving. We have to do our job and you have got to do the best you can. But it is very frustrating."

I was in Iraq on Telic 1 and am disheartened by the COGS comments. Disheartened not because of what he said, that I loudly applaud, but disheartened because none of our Officers have had the moral courage to open their mouths until now.

We have become an Army run by managers and led by an Officer Corps with little sense of duty other than to themselves.

Posted by Graham on October 13, 2006 5:27 PM

I'm another serving officer. My Wife and I cheered when we heard the news report last night. Sir Richard has demonstrated his moral courage, integrity and honour by saying what he believes in, rather than supporting New Labour's spin machine.

Tony Blair might find the truth unpalatable but the political situation in Iraq is due to his policies - the Armed Forces rightly stand proud of their achievements in Iraq.

My only regret is that Sir Richard appeared to be smoothing troubled waters during his interview on the Today programme this morning. I hope he will continue to be as candid and honest as he has been to date. The morale of the Army depends upon it.

Posted by Major Nick on October 13, 2006 4:17 PM

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Whilst I can see there may be some considerable unease, perhaps even outrage within the 'establishment' about the serving CGS exposing the shambolic lies of this government, we live in extraordinary times and sometimes require an extraordinary breaking of convention. Ten years ago, when still serving in the forces, I would have been horrified by this. Now, I salute Sir Richard and find myself instantly admiring a man I don't know - simply for having the courage to speak out against the utter idiocy of Blair and his politburo.

Posted by Archie on October 13, 2006 3:19 PM

Three cheers for General Dannatt!!! We certainly did in the Mess this morning. At last, a boss who will stand up for us!

Posted by Andy on October 13, 2006 3:04 PM

Well done Sir Richard, as the wife of an ex army R.E.M.E. soldier, I salute you. Please God there are many more like you to speak up for our boys out there giving their lives for a cause that should have finished long ago.

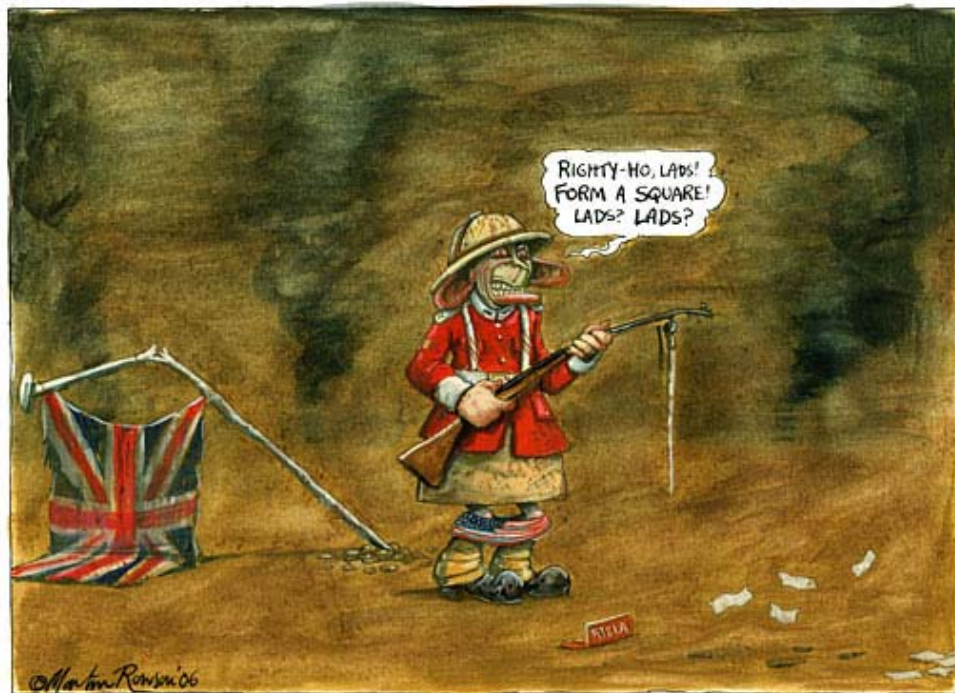
Posted by Diana Barker on October 13, 2006 3:02 PM

I am a serving Army officer and I am delighted that the CGS has spoken out.

We need more senior officers like him - not afraid to speak their mind and not hankering for a knighthood or Field Marshal's baton at the expense of the troops they are supposed to look after. Well done sir.

Posted by Major P on October 13, 2006 3:01 PM

MORE:



[Thanks to NB and Z, who sent this in.]

**One Soldier Wrote:
“Most Of Us Are Sick Of The
Weasel Words Of Politicians”**

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

14 October 2006 By Bob Roberts, Deputy Political Editor, Mirror.co (UK)

THE British Army will "break" if it is left in Iraq, its most senior officer said yesterday.

In an amazing interview, General Sir Richard Dannatt warned our forces will be seriously damaged if they did not pull out of the war-torn country.

It followed an earlier interview in which he enraged No10 by saying troops should come home "some time soon".

While Tony Blair and his spin doctors moved quickly to limit damage to the Government's position on Iraq, there was speculation the attack might open the way for an early pull-out.

Soldiers on unofficial military websites backed the general for having "the balls to stand up and be counted". Sir Richard, the holder of a Military Cross, yesterday said bluntly: "I am a soldier speaking up for the Army and saying, 'Come on, we cannot be here for ever.' I've got an Army to look after, which is going to be successful in current operations.

While Tony Blair and his spin doctors moved quickly to limit damage to the Government's position on Iraq, there was speculation the attack might open the way for an early pull-out.

On the unofficial military websites one soldier wrote: "Most of us are sick of the weasel words of politicians."

Another added: "AT LAST!!! After years and years, someone at the top, who makes the headlines, has had the balls to stand up and be counted."

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Task Force Lightning Soldier Killed By IED

TIKRIT, Iraq: A Task Force Lightning Soldier from the 105th Engineer Group was killed Thursday as a result of an improvised explosive device while conducting vehicle operations in northern Iraq.

Brooklyn Family Mourns Loss Of Son Killed In Iraq

10.4.06 NY1's Jeanine Ramirez filed the following report.

A Brooklyn family is mourning the loss of an American soldier who died Sunday in Iraq.

The Defense Department says 21-year-old Sergeant Mario Nelson of Brooklyn was killed when a rocket-propelled grenade landed near his vehicle in the town of Hit.

"Mario is my hero son," said Felix Nelson. "The guy loved too much. He loved me too much."

Felix Nelson spoke to his youngest son, Mario, just last week but then he got the news Sunday that the 26-year-old soldier was killed in Iraq. Mario was an Army Sergeant assigned to the 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment.

The Department of Defense says Mario died Friday when a rocket propelled grenade detonated near his vehicle.

His mother, Marie, has been overcome with grief.

"Maybe God can help me," said Marie Nelson. "Maybe God can help me. I don't know."

Mario and his family came to New York from Haiti in 1988 when he was just eight years old. He graduated from Brooklyn's Westinghouse High School where he met his wife, Macca. They were married in Prospect Park, and have a three-year-old daughter Mia. His wife and his daughter are in Germany where Mario was stationed.

"He's a very courageous man, a very brave man, a family man," said Felix's brother, Gary.

Gary says Mario was always patriotic, joining the National Guard for four years after graduating from high school and then re-enlisting in the Army. He served a total of seven years.

"I remember, after 9/11, he called me and said, 'Gary I'm out there. I'm going out there,'" said his brother. "I'm going to help."

His family says they tried to talk him out of a military life, but it was his passion.

"It's my job, mommy," said Marie. "It's my job.' Oh it's so hard."

"It's very hard for me to deal with that situation," said Felix. "I don't know. I don't know."

The Nelson family says they do not know when the Army will be sending Mario's body home but when they do, he will be buried in Brooklyn.

Mechanicsville Soldier Dies in Iraq



Oct 13, 2006 By Kim Schumacher, 8News

A soldier from Mechanicsville is dead after being killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq.

Shane Addock's mother, Vera, says, "There were two Army soldiers at the door, and I went, 'Oh my God ... No.'"

Vera Adcock describes the moment she heard the knock at the door and realized her worst fears were about to come true. She says, "I just went to the door and looked at them and like please go away, you're at the wrong house please go away."

She and her husband learned their 27-year-old son Shane was killed Wednesday by a roadside bomb. It was gut wrenching news that came at a time of great joy and celebration in their family.

Shane's sister, Shannon, had just given birth to twin boys just five days before his death.

Shane's sister, Shannon, says, "It just doesn't seem real, that was my only brother, he never even got to meet them, he was just talking about coming home in May and meeting the babies."

Not only will Shane never get to meet his nephews, he'll also never have the family he'd just started. Shane was a newlywed, married only four months. He and Jennifer made their vows in June, a month before he deployed to Iraq.

His widow, Jennifer says, "He was my knight, in shining armor, you know ... He was perfect ... He was everything I'd wanted in a husband."

Shane's family says he lived life to the fullest, making every moment count. They know he's in heaven now, watching over them, a special guardian angel to his nephews.

“A Navy SEAL Sacrificed His Life To Save His Comrades”



Navy SEAL Michael A. Monsoor, left, on patrol in Iraq in 2006. Monsoor died Friday, Sept. 29, 2006, in Ramadi, Iraq, when he threw himself on a grenade to save fellow SEALs. (AP Photo/U.S. Navy)

Oct 14 By THOMAS WATKINS, Associated Press Writer

A Navy SEAL sacrificed his life to save his comrades by throwing himself on top of a grenade Iraqi insurgents tossed into their sniper hideout, fellow members of the elite force said.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael A. Monsoor had been near the only door to the rooftop structure Sept. 29 when the grenade hit him in the chest and bounced to the floor, said four SEALs who spoke to The Associated Press this week on condition of anonymity because their work requires their identities to remain secret.

"He never took his eye off the grenade, his only movement was down toward it," said a 28-year-old lieutenant who sustained shrapnel wounds to both legs that day. "He undoubtedly saved mine and the other SEALs' lives, and we owe him."

Monsoor, a 25-year-old gunner, was killed in the explosion in Ramadi, west of Baghdad. He was only the second SEAL to die in Iraq since the war began.

Two SEALs next to Monsoor were injured; another who was 10 to 15 feet from the blast was unhurt. The four had been working with Iraqi soldiers providing sniper security while U.S. and Iraqi forces conducted missions in the area.

In an interview at the SEALs' West Coast headquarters in Coronado, four members of the special force remembered "Mikey" as a loyal friend and a quiet, dedicated professional.

"He was just a fun-loving guy," said a 26-year-old petty officer 2nd class who went through the grueling 29-week SEAL training with Monsoor. "Always got something funny to say, always got a little mischievous look on his face."

Other SEALs described the Garden Grove, Calif., native as a modest and humble man who drew strength from his family and his faith. His father and brother are former Marines, said a 31-year-old petty officer 2nd class.

Prior to his death, Monsoor had already demonstrated courage under fire. He has been posthumously awarded the Silver Star for his actions May 9 in Ramadi, when he and another SEAL pulled a team member shot in the leg to safety while bullets pinged off the ground around them.

Monsoor's funeral was held Thursday at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego. He has also been submitted for an award for his actions the day he died.

Associated Press Assholes Bury News That 12 U.S. Troops Were Wounded By Mortar Attack On Mosul Base

[This paragraph was stuck in the middle of a news story about a completely unrelated topic. T]

Oct 13 By HAMZA HENDAWI, Associated Press Writer

The northern city of Mosul was also under curfew after U.S. and Iraqi troops fought with gunmen Thursday night.

The fight was sparked by a mortar barrage on a U.S. base that wounded 12 American soldiers.

Two British Mercenaries Killed In Bombing South Of Baghdad

Oct 13 (KUNA)

Two British security contractors were killed after an explosive device targeted the US military engineering team they were accompanying between the cities of Karbala and Najaf, said an Iraqi security source on Friday.

The source said the attack took place yesterday and that the two British contractors has suffered serious injuries that caused their death, adding that the vehicle's driver also suffered wounds to the legs.

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



Iraqi citizens look at foreign occupation soldiers from U.S. Alfa company 1-17 battalion of the 172nd Stryker brigade combat team patrolling, in eastern Baghdad, Oct. 2, 2006. (AP Photo/Darko Bandic)

**Basra Occupation Under Siege:
“Downtown Bases Are Now Being
Rocketed Or Mortared Almost
Every Night”
“Foreign Troops Now Face Growing
Threats Across The Spectrum Of Militia
Activities”**

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

13 October 2006 By Mark Urban, Diplomatic editor, BBC Newsnight & October 14, 2006, The Times & AP

In a district like al-Hadi, a slum in northern Basra, the British Army is trying to set the conditions for its withdrawal from this city.

Maj Gen Ali Hammadi, the Iraqi security co-ordinator for the city, told us violence would drop by 80% if British troops stopped their arrest operations.

Foreign troops now face growing threats across the spectrum of militia activities.

Helicopters only fly into central Basra at night since one was shot down in May.

Downtown bases are now being rocketed or mortared almost every night.

And more roadside bombs are being detonated.

At night, elements of the Mehdi Army militia have fought running gun battles with Multi-National [translation: occupation] Forces: in one case we witnessed last week, a Danish soldier was killed,

British troops fired 5,000 rounds, calling in Challenger tanks and fighter cover.

Current plans suggest the British will draw down, closing three of their bases and cutting strength by about 3,000 of the current 7,000 troops.

The remainder would be concentrated around the airport, rarely venture into the city and would be there to offer support to the Iraqi security forces in a crisis.

The Shia militias will hope to upset these calculations so that they might claim credit for driving the British from the city and in Basra today, there is a definite sense that the end game has begun.

With fewer than 8,000 troops in the south, plus a contingent of soon-to-depart Italians and Danes, the Army does not have the manpower to go after the armed groups and risk a full-scale Shia rebellion.

Such an uprising could dwarf the insurgency that the Americans are struggling to contain within the Sunni minority to the north.

Several prominent Basra leaders on Friday agreed with an assessment by Britain's army chief that the British presence only worsens the violence and the soldiers should withdraw soon.

Added Aqil Talib, a member of the Basra provincial council from the Shiite Fadila party: "The British presence is no longer desired, as is that of the Americans and others, even though the British are kinder than the Americans."

But with the violence wearing on, anti-U.S. sentiment has been growing among Shiites across Iraq, and with it the feeling that international troops should go.

The militia of Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, which deeply opposes the U.S.-British presence, has been growing in power.

The desire to see foreign troops leave is also fueled in part by Shiite insistence they can run their own affairs.

"The British forces entered Iraq and liberated it from the Saddam regime," said one Basra resident, Essam Mohammed. "Since they have fully accomplished their mission, they should now leave Iraq ... because they are creating some obstacles and problems for the Iraqi people."

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Car Bomber Kills Occupation Soldier In Kandahar; Two Wounded: Nationality Not Announced

10/13/06 By NOOR KHAN, Associated Press Writer

A car bomber targeted a NATO convoy Friday in southern Afghanistan, killing a NATO soldier.

The attack in Kandahar also left one NATO soldier wounded, the officials said.

Pieces of the bomber's vehicle were scattered over the blast site and smoke rose from the scene as firefighters battled the flames. The fronts of 12 shops were damaged.

Two soldiers who were initially wounded in the blast were taken to a military medical facility, where one of them died, a statement from the NATO-led force said. Their nationalities were not released.

In the east, a bomber on foot rushed at a vehicle carrying Afghan troops in Khost province and set off a blast that killed himself, and wounded two of the troops

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

Canada Troops Battle 10 Foot Afghan Marijuana Plants



Canadian soldiers patrol in an armored vehicle around fields of marijuana in and around the village of Kolk in Panjwai District September 15, 2006. (Canadian Forces/Sgt Lou Penney/Handout/Reuters)

[Thanks to John Gingerich, who sent this in.]

Canadian troops fighting Taliban militants in Afghanistan have stumbled across an unexpected and potent enemy -- almost impenetrable forests of marijuana plants 10 feet tall.

General Rick Hillier, chief of the Canadian defense staff, said Thursday that Taliban fighters were using the forests as cover. In response, the crew of at least one armored car had camouflaged their vehicle with marijuana.

"The challenge is that marijuana plants absorb energy, heat very readily. It's very difficult to penetrate with thermal devices. And as a result you really have to be careful that the Taliban don't dodge in and out of those marijuana forests," he said in a speech in Ottawa, Canada.

"We tried burning them with white phosphorous: it didn't work. We tried burning them with diesel: it didn't work. The plants are so full of water right now that we simply couldn't burn them," he said.

Even successful incineration had its drawbacks.

"A couple of brown plants on the edges of some of those (forests) did catch on fire. But a section of soldiers that was downwind from that had some ill effects and decided that was probably not the right course of action," Hillier said dryly.

TROOP NEWS

**THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

***Army Lawyer Says “There Are
Thousands Of Soldiers Who
May Disagree With This
Particular War”***

Iraq Combat Vet Gets 90 Days For Refusing More Of War On Iraq

He said he told his commander: “Your soldiers and the way they’re behaving are creating the insurgency you’re trying to fight. It’s a cycle. You don’t see it, but I’m talking to the people you’re bringing to me.”

Oct 13, 2006 Laurie Goodstein, FORT BRAGG, N.C., Oct. 12, New York Times [Excerpts]

Sgt. Ricky Clousing went to war in Iraq because, he said, he believed he would simultaneously be serving his nation and serving God.

But after more than four months on the streets of Baghdad and Mosul interrogating Iraqis rounded up by American troops, Sergeant Clousing said, he began to believe that he was serving neither.

He said he saw American soldiers shoot and kill an unarmed Iraqi teenager, and rode in an Army Humvee that sideswiped Iraqi cars and shot an old man’s sheep for fun — both incidents Sergeant Clousing reported to superiors. He said his work as an interrogator led him to conclude that the occupation was creating a cycle of anti-American resentment and violence. After months of soul-searching on his return to Fort Bragg, Sergeant Clousing, 24, failed to report for duty one day.

In a court-martial here on Thursday, an Army judge sentenced Sergeant Clousing to 11 months in confinement for going AWOL, absent without leave. He will serve three months because of a pretrial agreement in which he pleaded guilty.

The case against Sergeant Clousing, a born-again Christian from Washington State, is a small one in a war that has produced sensational courts-martial. The same stark courtroom where Sergeant Clousing testified on Thursday was the site of the courts-martial of Pfc. Lynndie England, who mistreated and posed with naked Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib, and Sgt. Hasan K. Akbar, who rolled grenades into tents of American troops.

Yet the military prosecutors made it clear on Thursday that the stakes were high. Although they did not challenge his motives, they said if one young soldier disillusioned by the reality of war could give up the uniform without punishment, what of others?

“A message must be sent,” Capt. Jessica Alexander, the Army’s trial lawyer, said in her closing argument. “There are thousands of soldiers who may disagree with this particular war, but who stay and fight.”

Arriving in Iraq in November 2004, he said he was stunned at the number of Iraqis he was assigned to interrogate who were either innocent or disgruntled citizens resentful about the American occupation.

He said he told his commander: “Your soldiers and the way they’re behaving are creating the insurgency you’re trying to fight. It’s a cycle. You don’t see it, but I’m talking to the people you’re bringing to me.”

Back in Fort Bragg after five months in Iraq, Sergeant Clousing took his misgivings to his superiors. They sent him to a chaplain, who showed him in the Bible where God sent his people to war, the sergeant said. Then they sent him to a psychologist who said he could get out of the military by claiming he was crazy or gay. Sergeant Clousing said he had not been looking for a way out and found the suggestion offensive.

He called a hotline for members of the military run by a coalition of antiwar groups. The man who took the call was Chuck Fager, who runs Quaker House, a longtime pacifist stronghold in Fayetteville.

“This call was unusual,” Mr. Fager said in an interview. He said hotline receptionists took more than 7,000 calls from or about military members last year.

“I don’t have these kinds of probing discussions about moral and religious issues very often,” he said. “I said to him, you’re not crazy or a heretic for having difficulty reconciling Jesus’ teachings with what’s going on in Iraq.”

Sergeant Clousing said he could not file for conscientious objector status because he could not honestly say he was opposed to all war. After several months of soul-searching, he went AWOL.

After 14 months, he turned himself in at Fort Lewis in Washington.

He was returned to Fort Bragg, where he was assigned to a brigade made up of other soldiers who had gone AWOL. Five sat in the courtroom on Thursday, in uniform, waiting to hear clues about their future in the judge’s sentence.

Six Out Of 10 Voters Now Believe Australian Troops Should Be Brought Home

October 14, 2006 By Jane Bunce and Rachael Langford, AAP

IRAQ is Australia's worst foreign policy failure since Vietnam and the Government must withdraw to reduce our risk of a terror attack, Labor said.

Opposition Leader Kim Beazley today repeated his pledge to immediately begin withdrawing Australian troops from Iraq if Labor won the next election.

An ACNielsen poll earlier this week found community opposition to the war in Iraq was hardening, with six out of 10 voters now believing Australian troops should be brought home.

“Highland Should Not Send Another Soldier To Iraq” Third Iraq Death Has One Town Shaken to Core

Oct 13, 2006 Peter Applebome, Highland, New York

When Eugene Williams was killed by a suicide bomber north of Najaf, Iraq, on March 29, 2003, the grief was shadowed by what looked like a cruel accident of history. Only 11 days later, Baghdad fell. If he had lived a few more days, people thought, the war would have been over.

When Doron Chan died on March 18, 2004, after his vehicle turned over near Balad, it seemed too much to bear. This Hudson River town of 10,000 had accounted for three of the 58,000 servicemen lost in Vietnam. Now two of its sons were among what was then 600 lost in Iraq? How could that be?

But when Michael K. Oremus - "Mikey O" to his friends - was killed by a sniper bullet in Baghdad on Oct. 2, the numbers lost all meaning, washed away by tears: Jimmy Ventriglia crying all 45 minutes of his drive to coach soccer at West Point, Kevin Brennie unable to pull himself together when he heard the news at the town hall, tears and more tears at the wake here yesterday.

Death is more tornado than hurricane, picking its spots with capricious malice, but a third soldier gone, Mikey O, in this close-knit throwback of a town, Grover's Corners on the Hudson, seemed particularly beyond grief, beyond pain, beyond knowing.

"You have to understand, all the relationships here are so layered," said Peter Harris, who coached Mr. Oremus on the high school soccer team and taught him English. "You know people, you know their brothers and their parents, you know them for generations. So I held Michael when he was a baby, I played with him when he was 2 or 3, I coached him in high school, I played soccer with him after he graduated, as a friend. You don't experience that most places in the world. But you do here."

In this Ulster County town of deep ties and long memories, where family and soccer are two of the most enduring threads, few family names mean more than Oremus. Michael's older brothers, Eric and Richard, were soccer stalwarts. His parents, Madeline and Bruce, were universally admired. And when Bruce Oremus, who coached youth soccer teams in Highland and taught special education nearby in New Paltz, died of cancer in 1995, everyone in town shared the pain.

Many also shared the job of raising Michael, then 11 years old, a small, thin boy with a shock of blond hair. The Oremus family's kid brother became something of the town's kid brother as well. And if part of that meant developing a bit of moxie to be able to stand up to bigger brothers and bigger kids, he did it in spades. Despite his size, Michael was the kind of kid who would put on the goalie's gloves in practice and dare teammates, dare them, to kick one by him. The one in any group who would be first to vote yes on whatever plan was in the offing.

After graduating from high school in 2002, and a short stint studying at Dutchess Community College and doing odd jobs, he had a surprise announcement for his soccer buddies. He would not be playing with them next year. He had joined the Army to become a military policeman, a job that almost certainly meant hazardous duty in Iraq.

Some were scared for him, but they were impressed as well. "When he told me, I was shocked," said Mr. Brennie, who runs a pizza parlor where Mr. Oremus worked and who serves on the Town Council. "I thought, this kid has way more guts than anyone ever realized."

After he enlisted in February 2005, he came back from training beaming: buff, grown up, his post-graduation uncertainty washed away by the rigor and mission of military life.

While many here worried over every casualty report on the radio, others felt oddly insulated. They figured Highland had already overpaid its bill to the god of war. "We had lost two people already," said his best friend, Jacob Brett. "It seemed impossible to me we could lose anyone else."

When the impossible happened, some could not separate one town's tragedy from a nation's.

"Highland should not send another soldier to Iraq," one woman told the local newspaper, the Mid-Hudson Post Pioneer. Mr. Brett said neither he nor Mr. Oremus had been political, but the death had changed him. "I hope this does make people look differently at the war," Mr. Brett said. "I don't want any other people to go through what we're going through."

But for most, for now, the grief has obliterated the larger debate over the war. For the people in Highland, like generations before them, it is about young people who died much too soon, about families having to cope with too much and, this time, about a burden no town should have to bear.

On the road into town, there are war memorials from the Civil War to Vietnam. The flagpole and monument in front of the Methodist church honors those who served and those who died "in the Great War of the Nations," the quaint coinage before World War I merited a Roman numeral. And today, people say, the funeral for Mikey O, dead at 21, could be the biggest in town history.

"All three of them died so young," said Mr. Brennie. "They had so much to offer, so much they wanted to achieve, and it was all ripped away."

VA “Top Doctor” A Lying Worthless Scheming Despicable Rat Shitbag Quack Unfit To Practice Medicine On Dead Dogs: *He Says PTSD Is “Overestimated” And “Normal”*

October 13, 2006 By Lolita C. Baldor, Associated Press

Officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs say they have increased funding for mental health services, have hired at least 100 more counselors and are not overwhelmed by the rising demands.

"We're not aware that people are having trouble getting services from us in any consistent way or pattern," said Michael J. Kussman, acting undersecretary for health and top doctor at the VA. [Notice shitbags' weasel words. "Consistent way or pattern" means he's not denying vets are getting fucked over. He's just saying there's no consistency in the way vets are getting fucked over. But he puts up this smokescreen of weasel words to make it look like everything's just fine.]

Kussman said the number of troops reporting symptoms of stress probably represents a "gross overestimation" of those actually suffering from mental health disorders.

Most of the troops who return from Iraq have "normal reactions to abnormal situations," such as flashbacks or trouble sleeping, Kussman said.

[Fine. Let's send the rat Kussman off to Ramadi for a year. Then, when he gets home and goes to the VA for treatment because he can't sleep, and runs screaming from his flashbacks, tell him he's "overestimating" his problems, that it's all "normal," and kick his ass out the door and into the nearest gutter, where he belongs. T]

More than one-third of veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars seeking medical treatment from the Veterans Health Administration report symptoms of stress or other mental disorders -- a tenfold increase in 18 months, according to an agency study.

Veterans groups don't have data on the number of veterans encountering problems with the VA, but they said veterans are reporting long delays for appointments at the agency's medical centers.

One soldier in Virginia Beach, who said he was having a hard time sleeping after returning from Iraq was told he would have to wait 2 1/2 months for an appointment at the VA facility, [Paul Reickoff, executive director of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America] said.

“There Was No One To Counsel Him At Bethesda Hospital” “The Wounded Get Skipped Over”

10/12/2006 By Anne Neborak, News of Delaware County [Excerpts]

The death of two returning service men in the Delaware Valley area hit too close to home for members of the Upper Darby Marine Corp League Detachment 884. Combat veterans know what it is like to suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Many who return to the states from won't expect to feel disconnected and alone. They will be unable to define their sadness.

The detachment along with Vietnam and Gulf War veterans from all services have come together to help returning veterans find the help they need by forming the Combat Mind to Civilian Mind Outreach Program for Afghanistan and Iraq veterans.

Matt Crawford who returned from Iraq two years ago knows the need for such a group first hand.

On his first tour of duty he received a debriefing but when he returned home after being wounded during his second tour of duty there was no one to counsel him at Bethesda Hospital.

"I talked to a chaplain for five minutes. The wounded get skipped over," says Crawford.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Taking Out 25 Collaborator Cops A Day

Oct 12 by Mira Oberman, AFP

Violence in Iraq forces the interior ministry to budget a loss of 25 police officers each day to death or permanent injury, a US security advisor said.

"We budgeted for 10 Iraqi policemen killed every day and 15 wounded in action to the point where they had to be retired from action" in 2006, Gerald Burke, National Security Advisor to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior said.

Assorted Resistance Action



Police station damaged by a bomb attack in Hilla October 13, 2006. REUTERS/Stringer (IRAQ)

October 13, 2006 Radio Free Europe & Reuters & Dave Clark (AFP)

A bomb exploded in the office of Colonel Salaam Maamuri, commander of a US-trained police rapid intervention team in the mainly Shiite central city of Hilla, killing him and his deputy.

Maamuri has survived several previous assassination attempts.

His squad was set up with US support to fight insurgents in an area just south of the capital that has become notorious as the "Triangle of Death".

Another 12 police officers were injured by the blast.

The blast punched a hole in the building's ceiling in central Hilla.

A curfew was imposed in the northern city of Mosul after fierce overnight clashes left one police lieutenant dead, police Colonel Abdel Karim al-Juburi said.

Despite the lock-down, however, a car bomber killed three Iraqi soldiers in the Mosul region when he ploughed his explosives-laden vehicle into their patrol and detonated it, local official General Najm Abdullah said.

Guerrillas shot an off-duty Iraqi soldier in front of his home in Kirkuk.

And in the southern city of Amara, a police corporal was shot dead inside his house, police said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Frederick Douglas, 1852

The Signature Sword Of The Roman Empire



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: October 11, 2006

The M-16--made in America.

The weapon that is seen around the world.

The signature sword of the Roman Empire.

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

U.S. Troops In Iraq Dying In Vain: No Winning Options Left: “Basically It’s A Choice Of Poisons For American Policy- Makers”

[Unfortunately, it’s not the policy makers who will be dead. It’s the troops who will do the dying for this useless, stupid, hopeless lost war of Imperial occupation.]

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

Oct 12, 2006 By Will Dunham, Reuters

Cato Institute defense analyst Ted Carpenter described a dilemma faced by the U.S. military on casualties.

"It can hunker down and concentrate on force protection, in which case the casualties always decline," Carpenter said, but Iraq's violence might spiral out of control.

"Or it can go out and patrol more aggressively, in which case the casualties go up dramatically. So basically it's a choice of poisons for American policy-makers," Carpenter added.

“The ‘War On Terror’ Has Become A War Of Terror”

“How Much Longer Will We Wait Before We Are Ready To Finally Admit That The Murderer Lives In Our Own House”

Have we become so complacent, so coward and intimidated by this government that we have forgotten our own revolutionary birthright of rebellion and dissent?

Oct 10, 2006 By Ron Kovic, Vietnam Veteran, Truthdig.com [Excerpt]

For the past three and a half years I have watched in horror the mirror image of another Vietnam unfolding in Iraq.

As of this writing over 2,700 Americans have died and nearly 20,000 have been wounded while tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians, many of them women and children, have been killed.

Refusing to learn from the lessons of Vietnam, our government continues to pursue a policy of deception, distortion, manipulation and denial, doing everything it can to hide from the American people its true intentions in Iraq.

Sadly, the “War on Terror” has become a war of terror.

Never before has this government through its outrageous provocations and violent aggressions placed the citizens of this country in such grave danger. Never have the people of this country been so threatened, never before has life and liberty been in such great peril; not in the two hundred and thirty years since our revolution have we as a people and a nation been at such a crucial turning point.

These are dangerous times. A century of arrogance, brutality and aggression has come back to haunt us all. September 11th has happened.

The mask has been ripped away. The lie has been exposed and this criminal government now stands naked before the world!

These are provocative words, and the truth may be deeply unsettling but when will we speak the truth? When will we end this silence?

How much longer will we wait before we are ready to finally admit that the murderer lives in our own house, that this government that we entrusted long ago

with the sacred task of protecting life and liberty now, by it's every reckless, unjust and immoral action threatens the lives and liberty of us all?

Have we become so complacent, so coward and intimidated by this government that we have forgotten our own revolutionary birthright of rebellion and dissent?

Have we become so paralyzed by the eleventh of September that we would give up our liberty and freedom for the promise of a security that does not exist by a government that now threatens our very lives?

What will it take before we finally realize the true reality of this crisis?

How many more terrorist attacks, senseless wars, flag draped caskets, grieving mothers, paraplegics, amputees, stressed out sons and daughters before we finally begin to break the silence of this shameful night?

Let us open up our hearts and speak in a way we have never spoken before knowing that lives now depend on it, and the very survival of our nation is now at stake.

Let not our silence in this crucial moment betray us from our destiny.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

WHY DO WE STILL FIGHT AND DIE? IT'S ALL ABOUT GEORGE

[Thanks to Don Bacon, smedleybutlersociety@msn.com, who sent this in.]

October 12, 2006, William S. Lind, anti-war.com

At least 32 American troops have been killed in Iraq this month. Approximately 300 have been wounded. The "battle for Baghdad" is going nowhere.

A Marine friend just back from Ramadi said to me, "It didn't get any better while I was there, and it's not going to get better."

Virtually everyone in Washington, except the people in the White House, knows that is true for all of Iraq.

Actually, I think the White House knows it too.

Why then does it insist on "staying the course" at a casualty rate of more than one thousand Americans per month? The answer is breathtaking in its cynicism: so the retreat from Iraq happens on the next president's watch. That is why we still fight.

Yep, it's now all about George.

Would they let thousands more young Americans get killed or wounded just so George W. does not have to face the consequences of his own folly? In a heartbeat.

Not that it's going to help. When history finally lifts it leg on the Bush administration, it will wash all such tricks away, leaving only the hubris and the incompetence.

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION
BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**

GEORGE BUSH: POLITICAL GENIUS The Commander-in-Chief Speaks

13 October 2006 By William Rivers Pitt, Truthout Perspective [Excerpts]

George W. Bush gave a press conference this past Wednesday in an attempt to snatch back the conversation from North Korea's nukes and Mark Foley's instant messages.

A reporter from CNN asked him about the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health report that puts the civilian death toll in Iraq at 655,000.

"I am, you know, amazed that this is a society which so wants to be free that they're willing to - you know, that there's a level of violence that they tolerate," he responded.

On October 4th, 2001, less than a month after the [9/11] attacks, Mr. Bush said, "We need to counter the shock wave of the evildoer by having individual rate cuts accelerated and by thinking about tax rebates."

**LIAR
TRAITOR
TROOP-KILLER**

DOMESTIC ENEMY UNFIT FOR COMMAND



Oct. 5, 2006. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

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http://robinlea.com/GI_Special/; <http://imagineaworldof.blogspot.com/>; <http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>; http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/;

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